Melting of glaciers

†2140. SHRI SATYAVRAT HATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more cracks are appearing in the Himalayan glaciers and they are melting slowly;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to deal with this situation?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SISAL): (a) Yes Sir. Glaciers, in general, including the Himalayan glaciers, are receding. Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been conducting studies on the recession of the Gangotri glacier since 1935. In eastern Himalayas, which sit in the Ganga basin, have reported glacier melts.

The rate of shrinking of 30.2 km-long Gangotri Glacier in the last three decades has been found to be more than the rate during the earlier decades. Average recession for this period is about 25 meter/year (83 feet/year). Wadia Institute of Himiilayan Geology (WIHG) is studying the melting of Himalayan Glaciers in the Garhwal Himalaya, namely, Dokriani and Chorabari glaciers. The Dokriani and Chorabari glaciers have been receding at an average rate of 17.5 m/year between 1991 and 2005, and 10 m/year between 2003 and 2006 respectively.

(b) The melting of glaciers, as observed, the rate being larger in the last 3 decades is attributed to the phenomenon of global warming.

(c) Department of Science and Technology (DST) is planning to establish a specialized research centre at the national level for initiating scientific studies on Himalayan Glaciology including the effective monitoring all important glaciers and to work out options to effectively deal with the emerging situation with increased snow melts in the future.

Research in the Arctic circle

2141. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any effort to focus and activate research in the Arctic Circle, to make claims for its oil and other wealth;

(b) whether Government have noted the hyper activism of some countries to gain a foot-hold in the Arctic Circle;

(c) what steps would be taken to intensify effort to send more teams and strengthen India's claims; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.